

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached substitute sheets of drawings include changes to Figs. 1 and 25. In Fig. 1, the block 29 has been relabeled. In Fig. 25, the legend "CONVENTIONAL" has been added. It is respectfully submitted that these changes are fully supported by the originally filed specification.

REMARKS**INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS**

Initially, Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 2-7, 16 and 17 include allowable subject matter, and that claims 2-7, 16 and 17 would be allowable if they are rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In view of the herein contained amendments to the claims, specification and drawings, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections set forth in the above-noted Official Action, mailed October 9, 2007, together with an indication of the allowability of claims 1, 2 and 4-24 in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is believed to be appropriate and proper.

SUMMARY OF THE OFFICE ACTION

The Official Action objects to the drawings. FIG. 25 has been objected to as failing to include a legend, and the drawings in general have been objected to as failing to show the “first timer, second timer, third time, fourth timer, fifth timer, sixth timer and seventh timer”. The Official Action objects to some relatively minor formal matters relating to the specification. The Official Action has rejected claims 1, 8-15, 20 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over ISHIZUKA et al (U.S. Patent 6,850,015) in view of NISIMURA (JP 63307695). Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over ISHIZUKA et al. in view of NISHIMURA and further in view of KUMAGAI et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,141,937). Claims 19 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of ISHIZUKA et al. in view of NISHIMURA and further in view of OSHAWA (U.S. Patent No. 6,967,288). The Official Action indicates that claims 2-7, 16 and 17 include allowable subject matter, and

that claims 2-7, 16 and 17 would be allowable if they are rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

THE DRAWINGS

The Official Action objects to the drawings. FIG. 25 has been objected to as failing to include a legend, and the drawings in general have been objected to as failing to show the “first timer, second timer, third time, fourth timer, fifth timer, sixth timer and seventh timer”. The attached substitute sheets of drawings include changes to Figs. 1 and 25. In Fig. 1, the block 29 has been relabeled to identify the Timers Nos. 1-7. In Fig. 25, the legend “CONVENTIONAL” has been added to Fig. 25. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the objection to the drawings and approve the attached substitute sheets of drawings.

THE SPECIFICATION

The Official Action objects to the specification as including some relatively minor informalities. Accordingly, the specification has been amended to correct the informalities noted in the Official Action.

THE CLAIMS

The Official Action also has rejected claims 1, 8-15, 20 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over ISHIZUKA et al in view of NISIMURA. The Official Action indicates that claims 2-7, 16 and 17 include allowable subject matter, and that claims 2-7, 16 and 17 would be allowable if they are rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations

of allowable dependent claim 3, and claim 3 has been canceled. Dependent claim 5 has been amended to depend from claim 1 instead of canceled claim 3. Dependent claims 16 and 19 have also been amended to improve their clarity. New claim 23 has been added, and it corresponds exactly to original dependent claim 4 rewritten in independent form. New claim 24 has been added, and it corresponds exactly to original dependent claim 7 rewritten in independent form. Applicants respectfully submit that all the pending claims include allowable subject matter, and respectfully request an indication of the allowability of claims 1, 2 and 4-24 in the next Official communication.

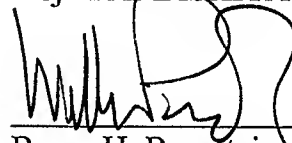
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In view of the fact that none of the art of record, whether considered alone or in combination, discloses or suggests the present invention as now defined by the pending claims, and in further view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the Examiner's action and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested and are believed to be appropriate.

Should the Commissioner determine that an extension of time is required in order to render this response timely and/or complete, a formal request for an extension of time, under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a), is herewith made in an amount equal to the time period required to render this response timely and/or complete. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any required extension of time fee under 37 C.F.R. §1.17 to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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